

Preface

This Inventory is the documentation of two years of study of the natural heritage of Forsyth County. The primary team of investigators included expertise in ecology, botany, zoology and geology. The inventory team was supplemented by the thoughts and suggestions of many residents interested in the identification and documentation of these special places in Forsyth County. Through preliminary work with topographic maps, soil maps, aerial photographs, historical records and input from knowledgeable persons, a list of about 90 sites was developed. These places were visited one or more times to determine the quality and extent of the natural features. Some sites only required a quick visit to determine that there were no remnants of natural communities remaining. Other sites, depending on their size, complexity or the season of the year, required several visits to document adequately.

The significance of a particular site was largely determined by the consensus of the team with the aid of the staff of the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program (Amoroso and Weakley 1995, Hall 1995, LeGrand and Hall 1995, Oakley and LeGrand 1995, Schafale and Weakley 1990). Sites vary widely in the qualities that make them significant. Some sites are significant based on the size and quality of their natural communities, or they might be small yet contain a rare community or species. A large and locally important wetland might be only a fraction of an acre, whereas a significant forest is typically tens or even hundreds of acres in size in this part of the Piedmont (Lyon 1993, Ward 1994, Wilson 1992). The location of sites is also important since adjacent or connected sites are considered more significant and rank higher accordingly (Harris, 1984, Falk et.al. 1996).

Each of the sites that were thought to be significant were documented with a site report. The site reports contain the basic data from the inventory of each site, and copies will be on file at the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program and The Piedmont Land Conservancy. They contain standardized information used by the Natural Heritage Program staff and other scientists who might have an interest, and use the information about these sites. Much of the information contained in the site reports was used to construct the site descriptions in this document. While primarily a plant natural community (Schafale and Weakley 1990) inventory, some additional information has been added to increase the scope of the Inventory. Additionally, this document includes information on animal habitats (Hall 1995), wetland and water features (DEHNR Report 97-01), and landscape ecology and management recommendations. The general description was designed to be a summary of the site and a distillation of the significant features in terms that are useful both to the general public and scientific specialists.

Information extracted from the site reports is summarized in Chapter 5, Site Descriptions. Pared down to site name, size, significance, location, general description, ownership (public or private) and protection status, the site descriptions allow quick and relevant comparison of a wide range of sites. Other chapters in this document were constructed using other data collected during the inventory. Tables listing the occurrence of the natural community types, rare plants